

Irrefutable Evidence by jackwabbit

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-24 21:20:39

Updated: 2017-11-24 21:20:39

Packaged: 2019-12-17 05:02:25

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,224

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Vignette. Dad Hopper. Time Frame: Shortly after Season Two. Spoilers: Stranger Things, Season Two. Summary: Sometimes, even the slickest con artist can't fight the evidence against them. And Eleven? Well, she doesn't stand a chance.

Irrefutable Evidence

Irrefutable Evidence

Rated: G

Category: Vignette. Dad Hopper.

Time Frame: Shortly after Season Two.

Spoilers: Stranger Things, Season Two.

Summary: Sometimes, even the slickest con artist can't fight the evidence against them. And Eleven? Well, she doesn't stand a chance.

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon at the cabin - for once.

Jim Hopper was reading a newspaper while his daughter perused the Sears catalog.

Every so often, she'd inhale sharply. Jim had long since given her a pen to mark the things that elicited that response, so she wouldn't interrupt him every time. But he'd still look up when he heard her. He'd still grin, loving that such a simple activity could make her so happy and grateful the irritability she'd shown all morning had passed.

So when she turned the page and did that little inhale yet again, Hopper watched her over his paper.

But this time, he didn't grin and go back to his reading. Because this time, instead of grabbing her pen from behind her ear or from her mouth and frantically making circles in the book, she reached behind her and scratched at one shoulder, mouth screwed up in concentration. After a minute, she settled, and Hopper did the same.

But a moment later, she repeated her action. She dug at her shoulder, but clearly not quite reaching her mark, she then rubbed it on the edge of the couch. Again, after a moment, she settled. But she absently rubbed at the area still.

It was enough to make Hopper break the silence.

"Hey," he said quietly, "you OK?"

Jane nodded, but looked a little confused.

"I think so," she said. "Just itchy."

Hopper's eyebrows raised. "Itchy?"

Jane nodded again. "Here," she said, reaching toward her shoulder again.

Hopper folded his paper and got up.

"Lemme see," he said, walking across the room and behind the couch.

When he got there, he pulled her shirt open enough to get a good look at her shoulder.

"What do you see?" asked Jane, seeming anxious.

"Nothing, kid. It's just a bug bite. Couple of 'em."

Jane relaxed. Hopper, however, did not.

Instead, he narrowed his eyes at the back of Jane's head and then pushed that head forward so he could see farther down the back of her shirt.

"Hey!" protested Jane.

But Hopper paid her no mind. He just took a very deep breath in and then let it out.

And when he spoke, it was with calculated calmness.

"I thought I told you no visiting."

"What?" asked Jane, twisting to look up at Hopper with all the doe-eyed innocence she could muster.

"I told you they could come here," said Hopper, very slowly. "Every other weekend. Only."

"Right..." drawled Jane, as if he'd stated the most obvious thing in the world.

"So why did you go to Mike's?"

Jane opened her mouth, but no sound came out.

Hopper just raised one brow at her.

And still she stayed silent.

Finally, Hopper sighed. "Look, kid. There's no sense in denying it."

"Denying?"

"It's a type of lie," explained Hopper, giving her a meaningful look.

Jane held his eye for a long moment, then looked down.

"Friends don't lie," she mumbled.

"So you went?"

Jane nodded.

There was that big breath in and out again from Hopper. This time, he ground his teeth, too.

"I told you..."

Jane cut him off. "No one saw me."

Hopper clenched one fist and started tapping it lightly on the back of the couch. He didn't trust himself to speak. After a moment, Jane spoke again.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

That actually brought a wry grin to Hopper's face.

"Not as sorry as you're gonna be."

Jane's brow furrowed in confusion.

"Grounded?" she asked plaintively.

Hopper snorted a single, strangled laugh.

"You wish."

Jane looked even more confused and Hopper took pity on her.

He eased around the couch and sat next to her.

"So," he said, "I ran into Mike's mom the other day at the store."

"And?" asked Jane, still confused but finding her voice again.

"And you'll never guess what she told me."

Jane was silent, so Hopper continued.

"Turns out her youngest just got over chickenpox."

"Holly?" said Jane, becoming more animated. She grinned.

Jim shot her a disapproving look, making Jane's smile fade.

"So, you know Holly, huh?" he asked, staring Jane right in the eyes.

Jane swallowed once, then nodded.

"Funny how that works," said Hopper, all sarcasm. "When no one saw you."

"She's just a baby," said Jane.

Hopper scoffed. "A baby who talks. And who made you sick."

"I'm sick?" asked Jane, looking concerned.

"Yep," answered Hopper. "I told you. Holly had chickenpox."

"What's chickenpox?"

Hopper sighed. "It's what you've got, kiddo. And it's going to get a whole lot worse before it gets better."

Jane's eyes grew wide.

"Worse?"

Hopper nodded.

"How much worse?"

Hopper shrugged. "Hard to say. You're a bit older than most. They say that's harder. But you're still young. You'll be alright. You'll just feel like crap for a few days and itch like crazy."

Jane's eyes got even bigger, and she looked downright scared.

Hopper let her stew for only a second before he sighed (softly this time) and pulled her into his side with one arm.

"It's OK, kid," he said into her hair. "Everybody gets chickenpox."

"Everybody?"

"Pretty much."

Jane relaxed and squirmed closer to Hopper. She'd been doing a lot more of that since the gate. He let her stay there a while before gently pushing her away. Jane pouted a little at this, and something inside Hopper melted a bit. Still, he didn't pull her back.

Instead, he stood and went to the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Jane, as he started to pull on his boots.

"Got to get you some calamine lotion."

Jane tilted her head at him.

"It's for the itch."

Jane nodded vigorously at him, already reaching for her shoulder again.

"Don't scratch," warned Hopper. "It'll make it worse."

With that, he grabbed his coat and slipped out the door, knowing he was asking the impossible.

He returned an hour later with calamine lotion, Tylenol, and a new pair of mittens he'd found on sale.

The Calamine wasn't much of a problem. And once the fever came, he could get the Tylenol down her, too.

Both helped.

But the mittens were a godsend. They were blue with white snowflakes on the back, and Jane loved them. She loved them so much she put them on immediately and wouldn't to take them off - at all.

And if meals were a bit messier for the next week and there was a fight over every bath because of that particular juvenile idiosyncrasy, well, Hopper didn't care. He was just grateful he hadn't had to tape socks over her hands like his parents had done to him.

A week later, Jane was back to herself.

She never was punished for breaking the rules.

She did, however, learn a lot of new words.

Contagious was the nicest of them.